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CONGRATULATING THE IRVING  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Irving Independent School District for being recognized by the College Board as the 2015 Advanced Placement District of the Year in the mid-sized category. This award recognizes the efforts Irving ISD has made in ensuring the academic success of our local school children.

Since 2008, Irving ISD has increased by 70 percent the number of students taking AP courses and has increased by 83 percent the number of students who scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam. Not only are more students taking AP courses at Irving, but they are also earning good scores, and that is really important.

I represent almost all of South Irving and District 33. Three out of the five high schools in the Irving ISD are located in South Irving.

To every teacher, principal, staffer, and parent at Cardwell, MacArthur, Nimitz, Singley, and Irving High, congratulations on this outstanding academic achievement. Thank you for making all of us Texas proud.

## PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Today, low-wage workers across the country rallied in small towns and big cities. Their request is very simple: a livable wage and the right to organize.

This isn't rocket science. These folks turn on the news and see reports on stock market gains on Wall Street. They see companies reporting record profits. They see the prices for bread and a carton of milk rising every month. Then they open their paychecks and see the same amount that they have seen for the past 10 years.

This is a crisis that my colleagues across the aisle keep trying to brush under a political rug. That may have worked in the past, but it is just getting too big to be hidden.

According to UC Berkeley economist Emmanuel Saez, the Nation's 100 richest families have as much wealth as

the 80 million families that make up the bottom 50 percent in wealth. Meanwhile, Republicans keep trying to peddle the same, tired "work hard and get ahead" rhetoric.

Madam Speaker, American workers are doing just that. They are stringing together 40-hour weeks whenever they can. In many cases, they are not given the opportunity to even do that, but they are being paid wages that cobble together to just over \$15,000 a year.

Even when McDonald's raises wages for the fraction of its workers behind the counters of their corporate stores, they will only get a raise of \$5,000. \$5,000 will make a huge difference for those families, but at \$20,000, they have gone from drowning to just barely keeping their heads above water.

That is not enough to pay for a college education or to buy a home. That is not enough to save for retirement. That is not enough to pay for medical bills. Madam Speaker, that is not enough to achieve the American Dream.

My Progressive Caucus colleagues and I are here on the floor tonight to stand with workers in the fight for \$15, that is \$15 an hour and the right to form unions.

It is time to support working families, and it is time to make it possible to work hard and get ahead.

It is now my pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON), one of the chairs of our caucus.

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I had an interesting story today. I was talking with a young lady named Stacy Mitchell, who is a researcher.

She does a lot of research on this issue of what is the economic effect of raising the minimum wage because what you hear so many conservatives say is, if we raise the minimum wage, maybe there will be a lot of workers who simply will not be employable because they don't have the skill level to be employed, they don't bring enough value to the business to pay them \$15 an hour.

What she showed—and this is through research—is that low wages lead to workers who have a lot of high turnover. High turnover leads to mistakes, leads to errors, leads to training errors, leads to bad customer service when the workers don't have a firm grip on what they have been doing. High turnover and the need to retrain then leads to a loss of money, and they have calculated that to about \$12,000 a year for the average small business.

Now, folks who are interested in learning more about this can contact the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. This is a small-business organization that says that we can have more economic viability if we focus on small business and not just the big-box retailer.

Of course, it is interesting because, whenever you talk to the big-box retailer about raising the minimum wage

or whether you talk to McDonald's or Walmart, they always say: yeah, we are making record profits; but what about the small business?

It was pretty surprising to hear that there are a lot of small businesses that have decided to pay people a better wage, keep them on the job, and as they stay on the job, they learn the job better, serve the customer better, and end up making the business more profitable overall.

A lot of businesspeople, whether it is Costco or Ben & Jerry's, are challenging this idea by the rightwing conservative business types that squeezing the most out of the worker, hurting the worker, taking the most out of the worker, paying the worker the least you can possibly afford—not any health care, not any sick days—just squeezing the life out of that worker is not a good business model. There are other ways to do it. There are ways for everyone to succeed.

Now, sometimes, my friends on the other side of the aisle like to say: Have you ever run a business? In fact, I have. I am a businessowner. I ran my own law firm for years. I employed investigators. I employed legal assistants. I even hired some lawyers.

When people arrogantly talk about, Oh, I know business, and you don't, it always makes me chuckle a little bit because I actually have run a business—owned a business—and actually have run fairly large nonprofits, which are also businesses.

It is clear to me that the real thing that I cared about as a businessperson is customers coming through the door. I needed people with money who could pay me. That is what I needed. If nobody was making any money, they couldn't pay me.

What was always better for me is being in a vibrant, strong community with an economy where prosperity was shared so that people had some business for me.

It is funny; I never worried about taxes too much. I can't imagine too many small-businesspeople staying up all night worrying about taxes. You know what they are worried about? Customers coming through the door, clients coming through the door, people who need haircuts, people who need meals, people who need a lawyer to do their will—that is what you have got to have.

But if the average working class person is broke because they have been getting paid \$7 an hour or whatever, they can't spend money with you.

It was interesting to me, when I first got to Congress, this was right before the real hit in the financial system in 2008. I was at a committee hearing. I will let the gentlewoman know, and I asked one of the witnesses at the committee hearing what their opinion was about Americans having negative savings because I found a statistic that Americans had a negative 2 percent savings rate.

That meant that you were borrowing to consume. That meant that you